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DEPT FOR DRL, INL, AND EUR/SCE, NSC FOR BRAUN, USUN FOR
DREW SCHUFLETOWSKI, USOSCE FOR STEVE STEGER

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SUBJECT: KOSOVO: UNIFIED ASSEMBLY DECLARES OVERWHELMING
SUPPORT FOR AHTISAARI PROPOSAL

Classified By: COM TINA KAIDANOW FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In a show of overwhelming unity, the Kosovo Assembly declared its support April 5 for UN Special Envoy Ahtisaari's report, committed to implement fully its provisions, and welcomed without reservation the international civilian and security presence that will be established in Kosovo as provided in the Ahtisaari settlement proposal. After an intensive USOP lobbying effort to ensure backing for such a declaration, attendance was a remarkable 101 MPs, of which 100 greeted the declaration (text at para. 7) with a standing ovation following the show of hands vote. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) In the wake of UN Special Envoy Ahtisaari's formal presentation on April 3 to the UN Security Council, the Assembly of Kosovo demonstrated unprecedented unity April 5 in supporting the Ahtisaari report. One hundred MPs voted for a declaration noting that the report was in accordance with the will of the Kosovo people, committing to implement the settlement provisions and accepting them as legally binding, and welcoming the international civilian and military mission that will be established under the settlement. (Note: The Assembly has 120 seats, but eight are empty due to a Serb boycott.)

¶3. (SBU) At the outset of the session, each member of the multi-party Kosovar "Unity Team" (UT) of negotiators addressed the Assembly, emphasizing the historic moment and Kosovo's readiness to join the modern community of independent, democratic states. President Fatmir Sejdiu noted the cooperation of the UT, the Assembly presidency, and caucus leaders, and said Kosovo would be "a serious partner" in implementing the proposal's provisions. Prime Minister Agim Ceku called the proposal a "balanced solution" and a victory of consensus and liberty. Opposition Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) leader Hashim Thaci stressed Kosovo's unity and invited MPs to vote in favor "so the world can hear us clearly." Reform Party ORA leader Vetton Surroi noted that the issue of Kosovo united the United States with Europe, and Christians with Muslims.

¶4. (SBU) The show of almost total unity was only broken by one MP. Prior to the session, Group for Integration caucus

leader Ferid Agani warned us that ethnic Bosniak MP Numan Balic, a member of his caucus, would be a problem. Agani said he was considering dissolving the caucus if Balic did not behave, and hoped he would simply stay home. With a few other hardliners like PDK's Xhevat Bislimi and Liberal Party of Kosovo (LPK) MP Gjergj Dedaj absent, and with even the E.O.-listed People's Movement of Kosovo (LPK) leader Emrush Xhemajli not opposed to the declaration, the perpetually unhappy Balic was the sole dissenter in the session. (Note: It is very unusual for Bislimi to miss a session; we believe he may have been asked by PDK leaders to stay away.)

15. (C) COMMENT: With double the usual media presence and extraordinarily high attendance, the Assembly's special session was a true success. No one tried to add the word "independence" or otherwise change the declaration text, indicating that they understood the rationale for such a decisive but nuanced declaration at this sensitive and important moment in the status process. After intensive USOP lobbying with the Unity Team, Assembly leadership, and individual MPs, the usual suspects for disruption fell into line. An overwhelming majority - 100 MPs - sent a clear message that Kosovo is firmly behind President Ahtisaari and the final status proposal, and indicated that they are ready to take on the obligations inherent in the settlement package regarding Kosovo's minority Serb population. END COMMENT.

16. (U) Begin text of the English translation of the Kosovo Assembly's April 5 declaration in support of the Ahtisaari settlement proposal:

Assembly of Kosovo, with this declaration

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Welcomes the Final Report of the UN Special Envoy for the Kosovo Status Process, presented by the Secretary General of the United Nations to the United Nations Security Council on March 26, believing that its recommendations represent a fair and balanced solution that is in accordance with the will of the people of Kosovo.

Accepts and commits to full implementation of the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement, and declares that, assuming that the Settlement is acceptable to the Security Council, the provisions contained in the Settlement shall be legally binding upon Kosovo.

Welcomes without reservation the international civil and security presences to be established in Kosovo, as provided in the Settlement, and commits itself to cooperating with and supporting those presences in every way possible, as they carry out the tasks assigned to them in the Settlement.

End Text

17. (SBU) U.S. Office Pristina clears this cable in its entirety for release to U.N. Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari. K Aidanow